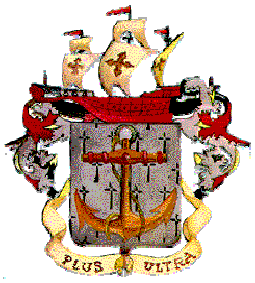
Presented by the Colombian Navy to the U.S House Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Subcommittee of the United States Congress

REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA
COLOMBIAN NAVY



"TRANSIT ZONE OPERATIONS: CAN WE SUSTAIN RECORD SEIZURES WITH DECLINING RESOURCES"

Document presented to the House on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Subcommittee of the United States Congress

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SUMMARY:
It costs terrorists and narcotics traffickers alike much more to suffer maritime interdictions; while seaborne platforms have effectively been used to jointly attack maritime narcotics traffickers, we can increase the financial damage inflicted by providing the Colombian navy with a fully equipped maritime patrol aircraft (MPA, DC-3). The financial damage caused by maritime interdiction, the cost effectiveness of an MPA, the increased volume of narcotics production, the seaborne routes using both coasts of Colombia, and the recognized nexus between narcotics traffickers and terrorists militates for the immediate use of MPA support. The cost per flight hour from the Colombian shore, versus the cost of air patrols from the U.S. and patrol vessels from the U.S. makes clear that the use of a DC-3 is cost effective however it must be equipped with the requisite equipment.

The strategy of cooperation between the Colombian navy and the United States maritime forces is expressed in the bilateral maritime agreement signed in 1997[1]. The interdiction successes achieved under this agreement were the most successful ever obtained in joint (U.S. – Colombia) operations against drug trafficking in the recent history of the global fight against narcotics. The operational results of 2005 were an impressive 97.3 tons of cocaine seized[2]; however a reduction of assets in 2006 can be seen by a decrease in operational effectiveness, with only 11.7 tons of cocaine seized in the year's first quarter[3]. We currently have more intelligence gathering capabilities, than operational assets.

MARITIME LOSS COSTS TRAFFICKERS MORE

The cost of the cocaine seized to narcotics traffickers this year-to-date is approximately 292.5 million U.S. dollars. Correspondingly, the loss that the drug traffickers suffer by the seizure of an equivalent quantity of cocaine in laboratories and land-based transportation zones corresponds approximately to only 6% of the loss that they incur by our seizures at sea[4].

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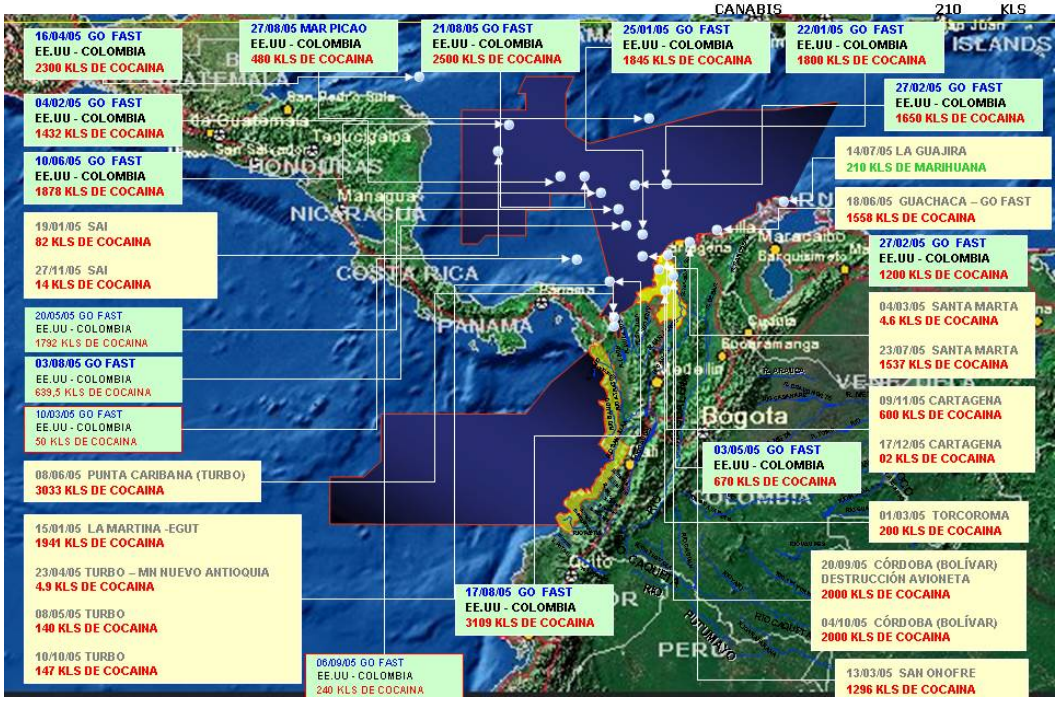
[1] Bilateral Maritime Agreement among the Government of Republic of Colombia and the Government of the United States of America to suppress illicit traffic by sea.
[2] Source: Naval Operations Department, Colombian Navy.
[3] Ibid. 2 facts from 2006
[4] Source of value: facts from "An Analytic Assessment of US drug Policy" by Boyum and Reuter – 2005/ and analysis of DDIN – Col.Navy. The source estimates the price of cocaine in transit between USD$15.000 and USD$25.000 depending on the route taken.

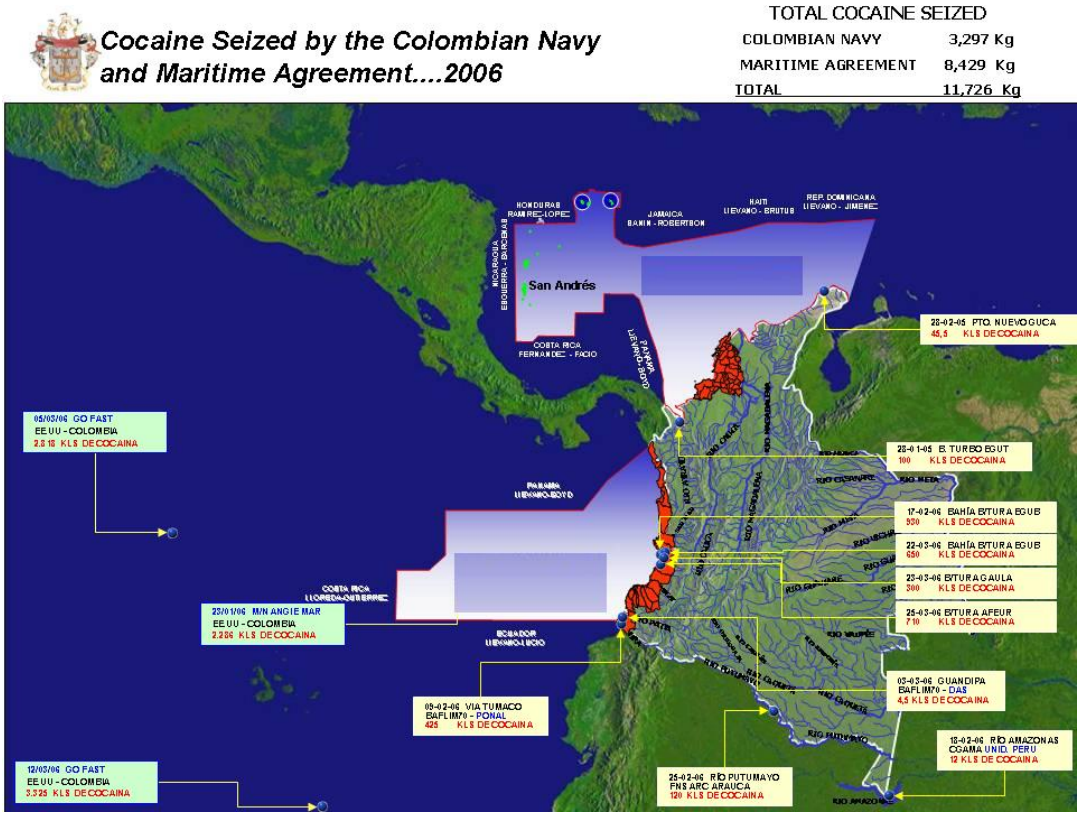
W. CAR Cocaine Seized by the Colombian Navy and Maritime Agreement...2005

TOTAL COCAINE SEIZED		
COLOMBIAN NAVY	14560	KLS
MARITIME AGREEMENT	21295,5	KLS
TOTAL	35.855,5	KLS
CANABIS	210	KLS



EASTERN PAC Cocaine Seized by the Colombian Navy and Maritime Agreement...2005

TOTAL COCAINE SEIZED		
COLOMBIAN NAVY	29.847,5	KLS
MARITIME AGREEMENT	31.194,7	KLS
TOTAL	61.042,2	KLS
CANABIS	7.826	KLS



MARITIME SHIPMENTS ARE MASSIVE – AND ON BOTH COASTS

Seaborne shipment and transport remain the most favored modus operandi for illicit drug shipment s from South America to markets in the United States, the Caribbean and Europe. An analysis of known drug routes estimates that the principal convergence point is Mexico from the south of the continent moving north to enter the United States. The magnitude of this threat constitutes a significant challenge to the capabilities of the Colombian navy. Both coasts of Mexico offer a substantial number of access points to traffickers departing from either the north or west coast of Colombia. In coordination with seaborne platforms, an MPA can more effectively disrupt maritime narcotics shipments from both the pacific and Caribbean coasts of Colombia.

FIGHTING BOTH NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS AND TERRORISTS

The magnitude of this threat constitutes a significant challenge to the capabilities of the Colombian navy, as they are faced with a dual challenge, not only are they fighting narcotics traffickers and their related criminal organizations, they are also combating the revolutionary armed forces of Colombia (FARC), identified as a terrorist organization by

the department of state[5]. Unfortunately, both the FARC and narcotics traffickers live in symbiosis feeding off of the money, blood, and fear that each generates; their unholy alliance serves to form the worst of all the world's narcotics traffickers. Therefore the Colombian navy has concentrated a substantial part of its operational, logistics, intelligence capabilities and budget in the detection and maritime interdiction of this threat on the Colombian seas[6]. If the Colombian navy can regain dominance and control of its territorial waters, our national security and that of the region will immediately improve. We must redouble international cooperation to attack narcoterrorism.

It is estimated that 70% of the global market demand for cocaine is supplied by Colombia[7] through the use of identified maritime corridors such as those using Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, these flows are very dynamic, hard to interdict and are determined by the behavior of different variables.

The "Mexico – Central America" transportation route is primarily used for illicit trafficking destined for the U.S.; DEA statistics from the first semester of 2005, show that 75% of the world's cocaine originates in South America[8]. This maritime transportation route is divided into two major sea routes. The first is the western Caribbean where the traffic volume is estimated to be about 30% of all traffic towards the U.S. - primarily originating along the Caribbean coast of Colombia. The other corridor is the Mexico-central American corridor which uses the Colombian eastern pacific and the coastlines of Ecuador and Peru. Both corridors lead to Mexico, moving 70% of the total volume of cocaine sent to the United States.

The second maritime corridor uses the coastal areas of Panama, Colombia, Venezuela and the Guyana's, using several intermediate destinations to transfer or consolidate the drugs for final shipment – some to the United States.

In 2006, given dwindling counternarcotics (CN) resources, in both countries it is essential that we support the most effective high impact programs targeting narcoterrorists. We have shown that seaborne interdiction costs to traffickers and terrorists alike are greater. That cost, plus the known corridors and modus operandi using sea borne transportation and shipping routes makes clear that high seas interdictions are cost effective and do greater financial damage.

In 2006, we face trends that are a greater challenge to combat and with a limited budget:

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[5] Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice , Drug Policy and Human Resources drug control budget briefing with Department of Defense Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Counter narcotics, Nov. 10, 2005; Dept of State, Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, 2004, at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/45323.pdf (last visited Feb. 24, 2006).

[6] Closing the gap, The Naval Strategy a cornerstone the fight against narcoterrorism, ISSN 1692-1097, 2003

[7] US National Drug Control Strategy 2004.

[8] Interagency Assessment of Cocaine Movement – (IACM), Document produced by 12 US Government agencies, enclosed South Command and JIAT-S, 2003 – Update by JINA Col. Navy Dec. 2005.

With the break up of the major centralized narcotics trafficking organizations, the smaller splinter units have become specialized and sell their services to the highest bidder. Narcotics traffickers, now narcoterrorists, contact narcotics transporters - groups that specialize only in the transportation and logistics necessary for the shipment of drugs. The transportation groups can afford to be more meticulous in planning their operations, they must be as they also act as a guarantor for the shipments from one point to another. In turn the shippers focus their resources on better and more secure methods to transship their client's drugs, money, explosives, and weapons. Their international connections and contacts provide semi-submersible vessels, small cargo vessels, (04) engine "go-fast" boats, vessels with classic hidden compartments or vessels trailing submerged torpedo-like units filled with cocaine. Shippers have the luxury of flexibility to change routes and methods of transportation at any time within the maritime narcotics trafficking event. The 25.6 tons of cocaine seized in 2005 were seized from fishing vessels (F/V's), in comparison the 11.7 tons of cocaine seized this trimester, all issued from go-fast boat events.

 [9]

In 2006, narcotics traffickers/ narcoterrorists continued to adapt to law enforcement operations. They have focused on the porous borders between South American countries to transship their loads via coastal and land routes, for final shipment off the pacific or Caribbean coasts. From the Pacific coasts these routes swing south of the Galapagos Islands then northward to Central America. On the Atlantic coast, shippers have adapted and are using the Caribbean coast with onward shipment to Central America, the Caribbean and the United States.
The magnitude of the narcoterrorist threat constitutes a significant challenge to the capabilities of the Colombian navy. For this reason the Colombian navy has concentrated a substantial part of its operational, logistics, intelligence capabilities and budget in the detection and interdiction of the maritime drug threat. If Colombia can reach dominance and control of its seas, our national security and that of the region will immediately improve. All international agencies need to redouble their efforts against narcoterrorism.

The geographical breadth of claimed Colombian maritime jurisdiction is roughly equal on both its north and west coasts. As such, the size of the maritime area causes, most if not all, intermediate contact points, go-fast boat refueling points, load consolidation and/or transfer points for an estimated 60% of the maritime traffic takes place in Colombian waters[10].

The use of Colombian naval assets is a more financially effective use of interdiction resources in the execution of the CN strategy. Simply put it costs less for Colombian assets to take action; U.S. assets costs are greater given the distance which these assets must operate from their homeports and bases and, because of the periods of time they're deployed away from these bases.

The goal of the naval component (naval forces and naval air assets) is to deny narcotics traffickers and/or narcoterrorists the access and usage of Colombian waters.

[9] Submersible seized by Col. Navy March 9, 2006 Southward Buenaventura, Pacific Coast.
[10] Colombian ONI Annual Report 2005

Maritime interdiction events basically evolve in three phases; intelligence, detection and interdiction or seizure. This approach works for both coastal areas and on the high seas. In the interdiction end game, detection near the coast is the most effective. However, this requires maritime patrol air assets, and overseas patrol vessels (OPV), Colombian coastal patrol vessels, submarines and surface surveillance radars located at coast guard stations.

Today, the coverage of radars in coastguard stations in Colombia is 58% (7 coast guard stations)[11]. Detection and interdiction on the high seas, based upon land-based radar vector can only be effective when using an MPA.

At the moment, the Colombian navy does not possess the necessary asset base to increase our detection capability. Further, our capability to take the detection of a potential narcotics target to the seizure point of an interdiction scenario is limited by lack of sufficient assets, as noted above. The necessary combination of assets - radar, MPA, helicopters and interceptors is our greatest weakness interdicting drug trafficking on the high seas.

While we often have assets from the United States and occasionally from other nations participating in interdiction operations supporting Colombia, they do not possess the adequate quantity of assets to permanent operations to a point where we are interdicting more northbound loads regularly.

The maritime agreement with the United States has been the basis for the development of an exceptionally complementary employment of assets, available from both the Colombian navy and the U.S. Coastguard, not only for the seizure of the drug, but for the arrest and prosecution of criminals. However, it is essential to increase the Colombian asset base and operational capability, as this type of investment will provide greater returns on a dollar-for dollar basis. Simple math makes clear that increasing operations from Colombian bases on Colombian shores is certainly less expensive than operating U.S. Navy and U.S. Coastguard vessels and aircraft for extended periods of time away from their U.S. homeports.

Let there be no doubt as to our strong interest and willing support to continue the close operating relationships with our U.S. counterparts. However, increasing our tactical capabilities will only reinforce the exceptional bonds which already exist between our maritime services. Investment in Colombian navy capabilities to increase and sustain interdiction operations at sea, combined with our successful eradication and inland seizure efforts by other Colombian national forces will eliminate both, main source of funding for the forces of terrorism in Colombia and Crime and Drugs in US Streets.

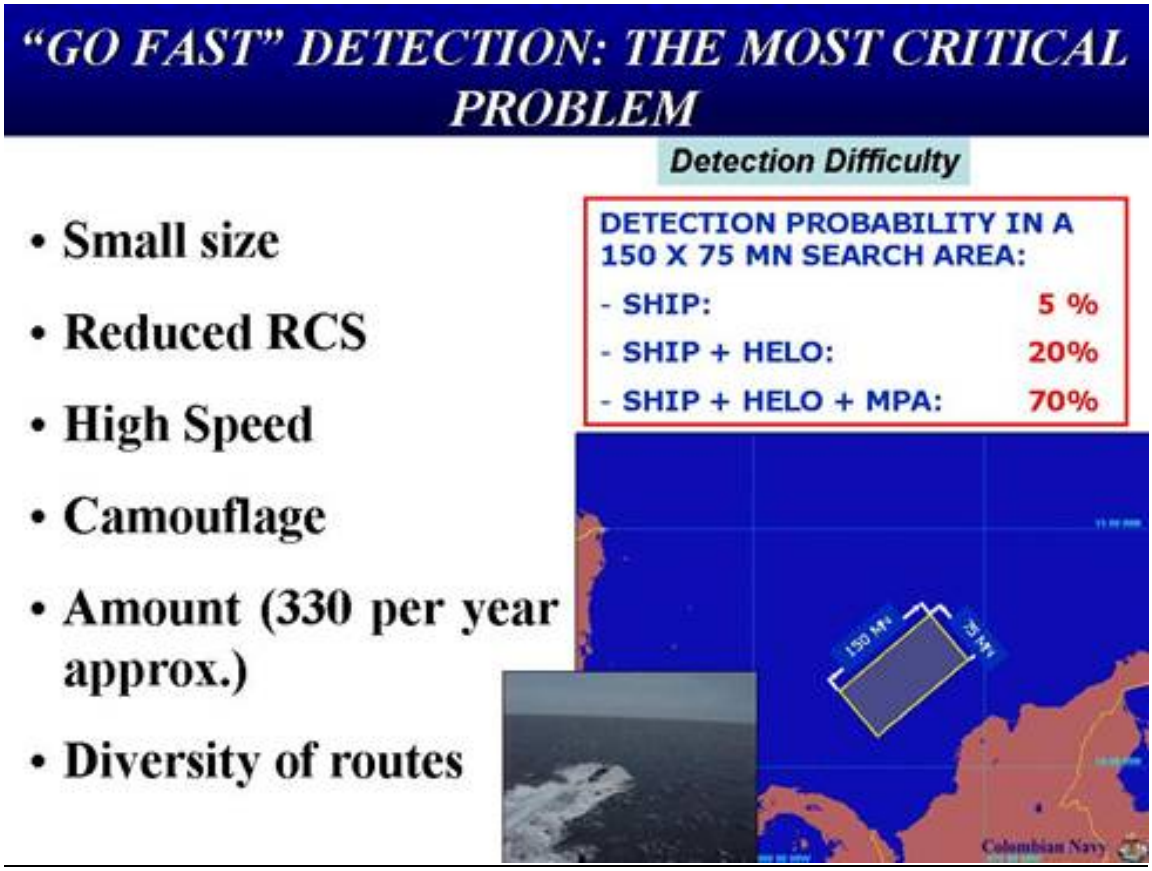
We must combine all naval forces (U.S. and Colombian navy, Colombian coastguard, JIATF-SOUTH, and Colombian Marines) in a manner that provides for real time reaction to intelligence information concerning maritime trafficking events. For assets to be effective they must be equipped with up to date and correct equipment to effectively detect, monitor, and support the interdiction of fishing vessels (F/V's) , submersibles and go-fast

[11] Estimate coverage does not corresponds to the total coastal area, ut strategic interest points as ports.

boats. A fully equipped MPA, acting in coordination with other maritime assets would help fill a large interdiction gap.

NEED FOR FULLY EQUIPPED MPA

Go-fast boats have been detected as far as 1,200 nautical miles off the eastern pacific coast. This is a huge area within which to detect a tiny go-fast boat. The typical search area for a go-fast is about 150 by 70 nautical miles. The probability of detection within this search area for a single ship with good sensors is approximately 5%. The detection probability for a ship in coordination with a helicopter rises to 20%, but only serves to show that 80% of all events will escape. However, the detection probability rises to 70% with the combination of the search ship and helicopter, working in unison with an MPA. An MPA has the capacity to provide a low cost and efficient method of maritime interdiction.



The detection of go-fast boats is extremely difficult on the open sea due to its small size, the reduction of radar cross sections, its high speed, rapid change of course, diversity of routes, and the different methods of camouflage. Most go-fast events transpire during the hours of darkness, visual confirmation of a small moving target, or target under camouflage is almost impossible, therefore the following equipment is critical:

- One plane (DC-3) can fly for 8-10 hours, at 200 knots, carrying advanced detection equipment, and in coordination with other assets, for a cost of approximately $450 USD per hour.
- Forward Looking Infrared - FLIR system to detect not only go-fast boats but also semi-submersible vessels that can not be detected by radar, but will show a surface heat signature.
- Inverse/ Synthetic Aperture Radar – SAR/ISAR system used to detect small targets at sea.
- Communications Intercept Package: COMINT this system will permit the intercept of communications (VHF/UHF/HF) between the go-fast boat and refueling F/V's; it will also serve to intercept shore-to-ship communications.
- Electronic Intelligence ELINT: package that permits the detection and identification of an F/V's radar signature and allows pursuit from a significant standoff distance.
- Standard communications equipment DATALINK to support secure data transceiver links via secure radio equipment.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on such an important matter of national security that affects both our countries.